

Street names and Transitional Justice policies

Francisco Villamil
STNAMES LAB Workshop
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Street names and TJ

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 - Set of policies implemented during transitions, usually from authoritarianism or conflict, with various goals (normative and positive)
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- Related to idea of toponymy as cultural markers, but probably more contested → research question

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 - short-term political reaction (e.g. backlash?), etc

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 - short-term political reaction (e.g. backlash?), etc
- Today, focus on **short-term political (electoral) consequences**

Do TJ policies cause backlash? Evidence from street name changes in Spain

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Abstract

Memories of old conflicts often shape domestic politics long after these conflicts end. Contemporary debates about past civil wars and/or repressive regimes in different parts of the world suggest that these are sensitive topics that might increase political polarization, particularly when transitional justice policies are implemented and political parties mobilize discontentment with such policies. One such policy recently debated in Spain is removing public symbols linked to a past civil war and subsequent authoritarian regime (i.e., Francoism). However, the empirical evidence on its impact is still limited. This article attempts to fill this gap by examining the political consequences of street renaming. Using a difference-in-differences approach, we show that the removal of Francoist street names has contributed to an increase of electoral support for a new far-right party, Vox, mainly at the expense of a traditional right-wing conservative party, PP. Our results suggest that revisiting the past can cause a backlash among those ideologically aligned with the perpetrator, and that some political parties can capitalize on this.

Keywords

Transitional justice, voting, conflict memories, Spain

Spanish context

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- Transition to democracy after 1977
 - Negotiated transition, 1977 Amnesty Law & 'Pact of Forgetting'

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- Unequal removal of public symbols linked to Francoism
 - Some municipalities unilaterally removed all or some symbols, including street names, in the 1980s
 - (e.g. Basque Country and Catalonia removed virtually all street names; in Madrid, Av. del Generalísimo became P. de la Castellana in 1980)
- Many symbols remained, from statues of Franco to street names

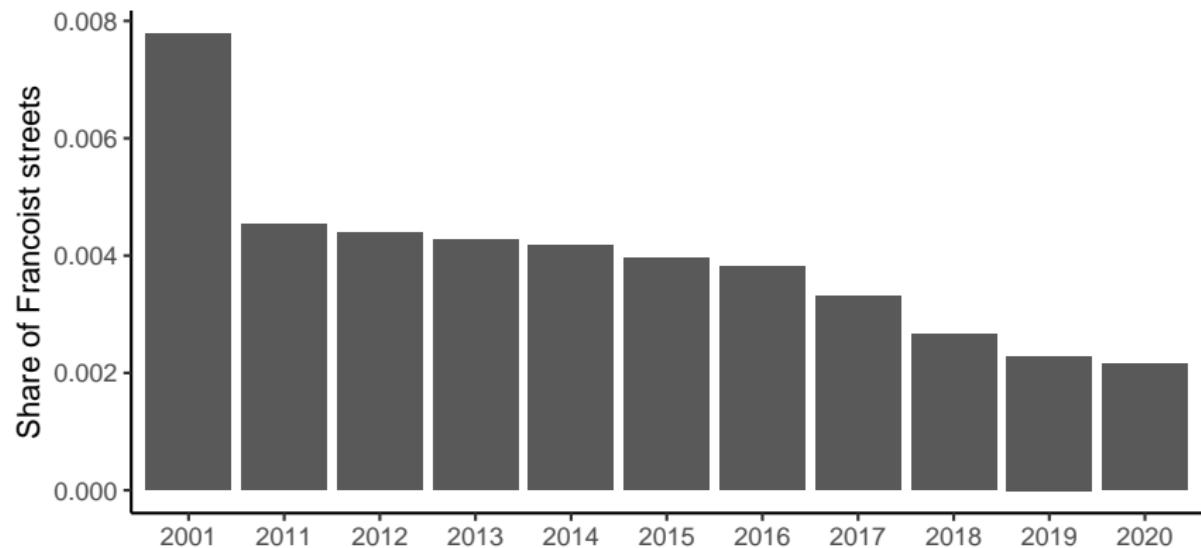
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- Social and political change around 2000
 - New social movements, renewed demand for revision of the past, etc
 - Domestic (grandchildren) and international (rise of TJ) factors

2007 Law of Historical Memory

- TJ law mainly focused on truth-seeking and symbolic measures
- Compulsory removal of Francoist symbols from public spaces, including **street names**
- LHM was weakly enforced: many municipalities did change street names, but many remained
- National dynamics: 2008 economic crisis, right-wing government after 2011 (and similar shift in local councils)

Francoist streets by year



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 - Electoral cycle

Olmedo es el primer Ayuntamiento condenado por no cumplir la Ley de la Memoria Histórica

Esta sentencia obliga al consistorio a «tomar las medidas oportunas para la retirada de escudos, insignias, placas u otros objetos o menciones conmemorativas»

EL NORTE

valladolid

Jueves, 30 junio 2016, 18:34



El Ayuntamiento de Olmedo ha sido condenado por el juzgado contencioso-administrativo número 2 de Valladolid por incumplir la Ley de la Memoria Histórica según publica Efe. La demanda interpuesta por el

MEMORIA HISTÓRICA >

Madrid cambiará antes del verano el nombre de 30 calles franquistas

El Ayuntamiento anuncia las vías y monumentos que se eliminarán en la primera fase de la revisión del callejero impulsada por el PSOE

BRUNO GARCÍA GALLO

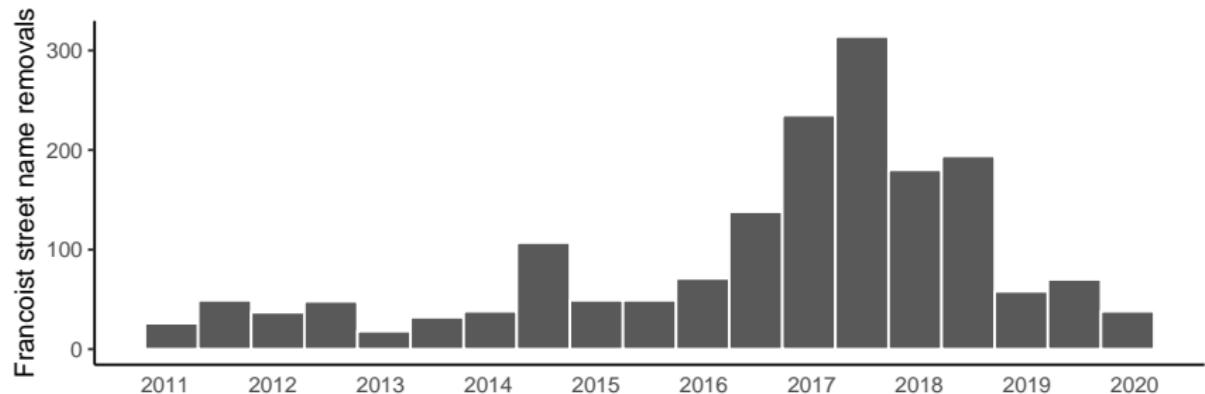
Madrid - 22 DIC 2015 - 22:19 CET

El Principado instará a los ayuntamientos a retirar la simbología franquista

La diputada de IU Concha Masa asegura que «queda mucho camino por recorrer»



Francoist street removals over time



RQ and design basics

- What are the consequences of removing street names?

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- Compare municipalities that removed Francoist streets during 2016–19 to those that did not, *only* among those that still had them in June 2016
 - Key ID assumption: changes during this period were relatively exogenous to local electoral dynamics



What are we measuring looking at Vox?

Santiago Abascal  
@Santi_ABASCAL

El día 22 estaremos en Bilbao para apoyar a compañeros d @vox_vizcaya agredidos ayer por los separatistas terroristas

[Translate Tweet](#)



2:47 PM · May 12, 2014

Data

- **Outcome:** local share of votes for Vox (and PP & PSOE)
 - June 2016 and April 2019 elections
 - (We also look at prior trends, esp. for PP/PSOE)

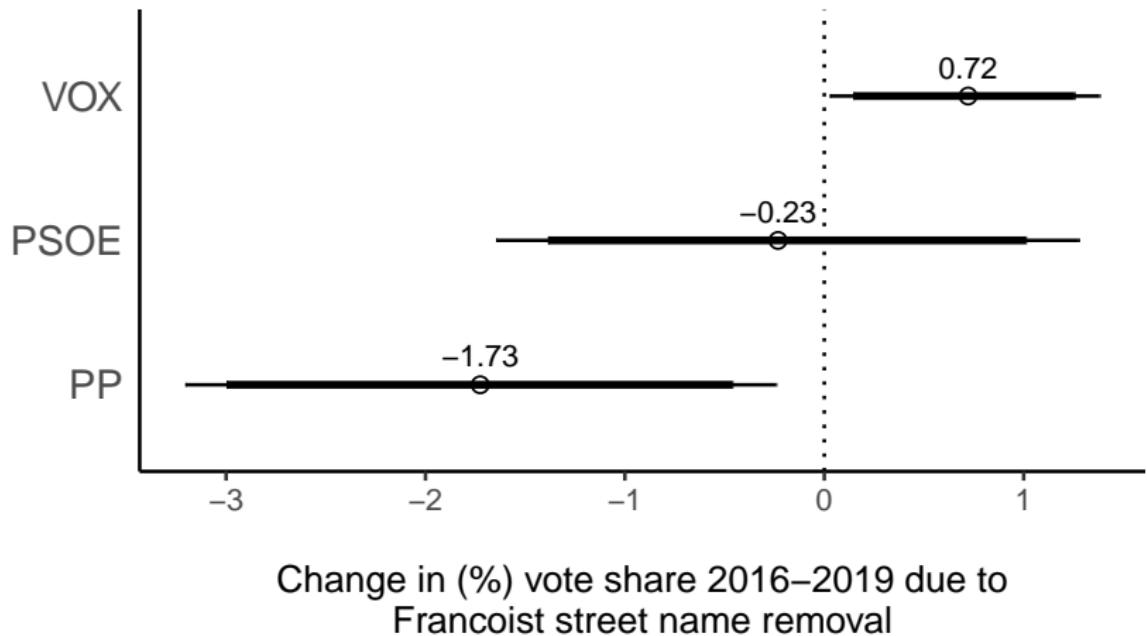
Data

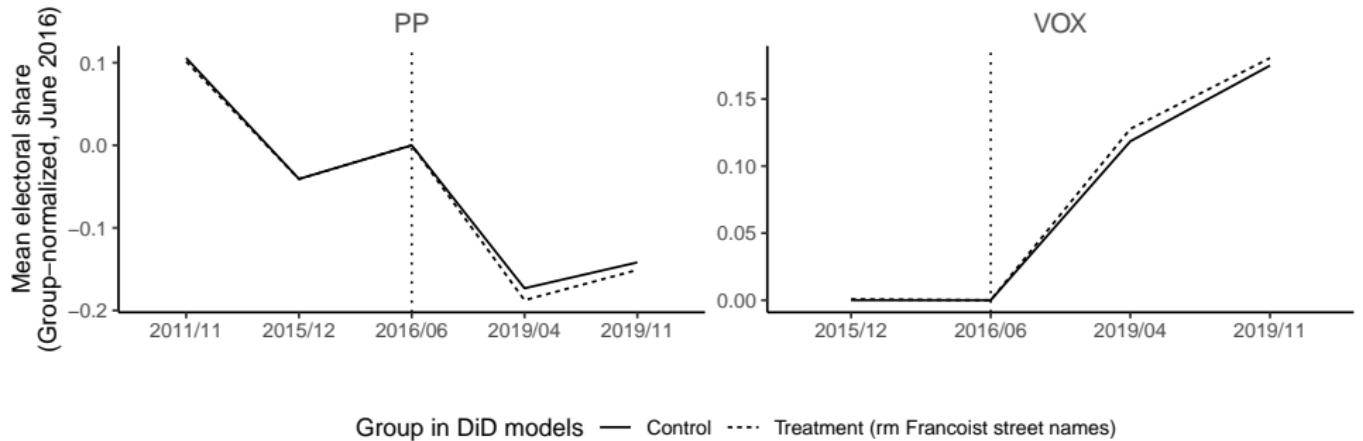
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- **Controls:** turnout (2016), population (2011), number of Francoists streets, unemployment rate, leftist mayor in 2015, region FE

Results





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 1. These are short-term effects, what happens in the long term?
 2. Should we blame the street name removal or the parties that take advantage of it?
 3. No need to throw the baby out with the bathwater
 - Explore combination of TJ measures, complement symbolic TJ with other policies (education, 'marketing', etc)

Future research with streets data

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 - What is the correct unit of analysis? (perhaps smaller, larger?)
- Beyond Spain and streets
 - Other types of toponymy? (less variation)
 - Processes in other countries, what account for renaming?

Thank you!

– Extra slides –

Francoist street names

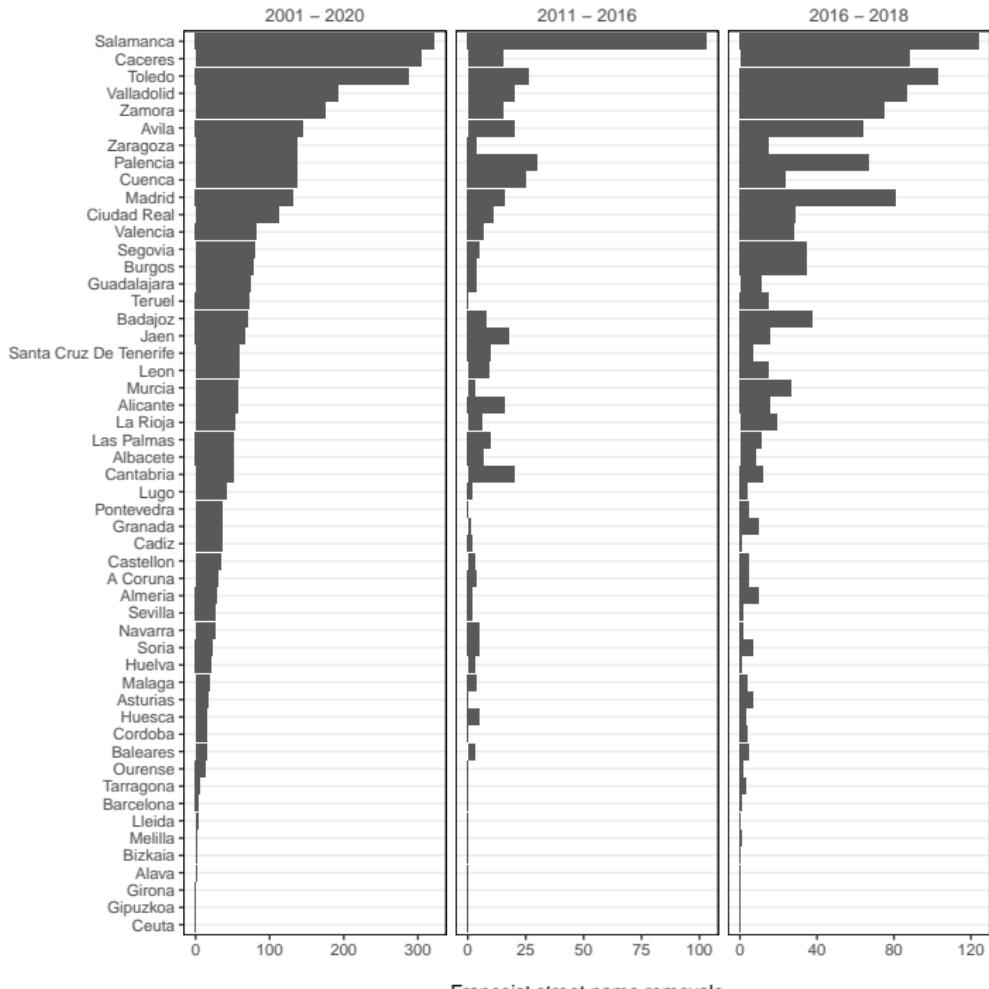
18 de Julio; Alcalde Conde de Mayalde; Alcazar; Alcazar de Toledo; Alferez Provisional; Almirante Francisco Moreno; Angel del Alcazar; Arco de la Victoria; Arriba Espana; Aunos; Batalla de Belchite; Batalla del Ebro; Caidos; Caidos (de Los); Caidos (los); Caidos de la Division Azul; Caidos Por la Patria; Calvo Sotelo; Calvo Sotelo (de); Capita Cortes; Capitan Cortes; Capitan Cortes (del); Capitan Haya; Capitan Luna; Carlos Pinilla; Carlos Ruiz; Carrero Blanco; Caudillo; Caudillo (del); Cerro de Garabitas; Cirilo Martin Martin; Comandante Franco; Comandante Franco; Comandante Zorita; Conde Vallellano; Crucero Baleares; Defensores del Alcazar; Defensores del Alcazar; Dieciocho de Julio; Diego Salas Pombo; Division Azul; Doctor Vallejo-Nagera; Eduardo Aunos; Ejercito Espanol; El Algabeno; Emilio Jimenez Millas; Falange Espanola; Federico Mayo; Federico Servet; Fernandez Ladreda; Francisco Franco; Franco; Garcia Morato; General; General Aranda; General Asensio Cabanillas; General Cabanellas; General Cabanellas; General Davila; General Fanjul; General Franco; General Garcia de la Herranz; General Garcia Escamez; General Kirkpatrick; General Millan Astray; General Mola; General Mola (del); General Moscardo; General Munoz Grandes; General Orgaz; General Primo de Rivera; General Queipo de Llano; General Rodrigo; General Romero Basart; General Sagardia Ramos; General Saliquet; General Sanjurjo; General Varela; General Yague; Generalisimo; Generalisimo (del); Generalisimo Franco; Gobernador Carlos Ruiz; Hermanos Falco y Alvarez de Toledo; Hermanos Garcia Noblejas; Heroes del Alcazar; Jose Antonio; Jose Antonio (de); Jose Antonio Giron; Jose Antonio Giron; Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera; Jose Luis de Arrese; Jose Maria Peman; Juan Pujol; Juan Vigon; Lepanto; Los Martires; Manuel Sarrión; Martires; Martires (los); Matias Montero; Millan Astray; Munoz Grandes; Onesimo Redondo; Pilar Primo de Rivera; Primero de Octubre; Primo de Rivera; Puerto de los Leones; Queipo de Llano; Ramiro Ledesma; Ramon Franco; Ruiz de Alda; Salas Pombo; Veintiocho de Marzo

Sample descriptives

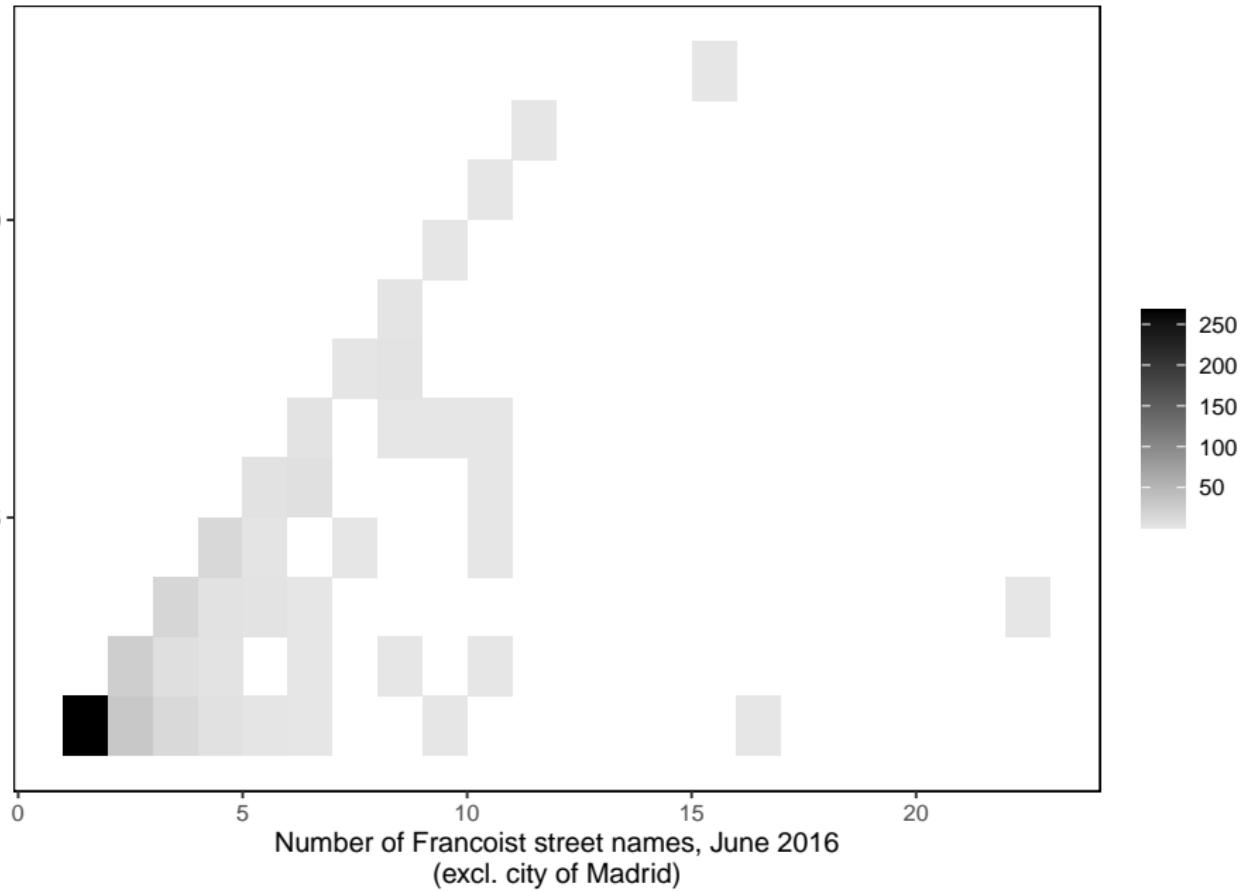
Table I. Sample classification.

Francoist names In June 2016?	Removed Francoist names, 2016–2018?	
	No	Yes
No	6455 (100%)	0 (0%)
Yes	1184 (72%)	454 (28%)

Note: Row percentages. Changes in 2016–2018 refer to the period between 30/06/2016 and 31/12/2018.



Francoist street names removed
(June 2016 – December 2018)



Street names and TJ

- Difference with other non-transitional changes? (e.g. gender)
 - Periods of political violence usually more divisive, deeper link with social and political cleavages
 - Potentially, different dynamics: more concentrated in time and linked or enforced to nation-level legal framework
 - But whether and how much it applies is an open question